

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 218368

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DRAFTED BY NEA:AR DAY:MAR

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 218368

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI HARASSMENT OF AMOCO IN GULF OF SUEZ

1. BOSWELL, OF AMOCO CHICAGO OFFICE, CALLED DEPARTMENT
IN AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 2 TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING TEXT
OF A NEWS REPORT ON THE AUGUST 31 INCIDENT THAT WAS TO
APPEAR IN THE SEPTEMBER 3 ISSUE OF OILGRAM NEWS:

2. BEGIN TEXT:

CAIRO, SEPTEMBER 2, 1976. ISRAELI GUNBOATS AND HELI-
COPTERS HAVE DRIVEN SANTA FE INTERNATIONAL DRILLING SHIP,
THE MARINER 1, OFF A NEW LOCATION NEAR THE FORCE MAJEURE
LINE IN THE SUEZ GULF, FIELD WORKERS HAVE TOLD OILGRAM
NEWS.

THE BARGE IS UNDER CONTRACT FOR DRILLING OPERATIONS IN GULF
OF SUEZ PETROLEUM (AMOCO AND EGPC) ACREAGE NEAR THE
RAMADAN FIELD.

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THE WORKERS IN THE EYE-WITNESS REPORT SAID THAT FIVE

GUNBOATS CIRCLED THE SHIP WHILE HELICOPTERS SWOOPED IN
FROM OVERHEAD AND EGPC OFFICIALS ON SHORE NEARBY INSTRUCTED

THE MARINER SUPERINTENDENT TO HOLD HIS GROUND, BUT THE
LATTER BROUGHT THE RIG TO SHORE TO AVOID AN INCIDENT.

OILGRAM UNDERSTANDS THAT THE US EMBASSY HERE HAS TRIED
THROUGH WASHINGTON TO PERSUADE THE ISRAELIS TO STOP
HARASSING THE SANTA FE SHIP, BUT EFFORTS TO OBTAIN INFOR-
MATION ABOUT ISRAELI RESPONSE HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL.

THERE HAVE BEEN SIMILAR PAST INCIDENTS NEAR THE FORCE
MAJEURE LINE THAT SEPARATES THE SUEZ GULF AREAS UNDER
EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI CONTROL. THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT IS
KNOWN TO RESENT WHAT IT CALLS ISRAELI SELF-APPOINTED ROLE
AS ARBITER AND ENFORCER OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE FORCE
MAJEURE LINE.

AT LAST REPORT THE RIG HAD NOT RETURNED TO THE LOCATION.
END TEXT.

(COMMENT: NEITHER WE NOR AMOCO HAVE EVER HEARD THE TERM
QUOTE FORCE MAJEURE LINE UNQUOTE THOUGH IT APPARENTLY
REFERS TO THE MEDIAN LINE.) KISSINGER

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